

12
Country
THE
Gloucestershire Squire:

OR, A
Christmas GAMBOL.
A
COMEDY.

As it was Acted
At a GENTLEMAN'S Seat near
that CITY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

UTILE DULCI.

LONDON:

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THE
GALATHEA 2 June

JOHN W. CAMPBELL

1881

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P R E F A C E.

TH E following SCENES are the Production of a Gentleman deceased, "who was
" justly allowed by all, that had the Happiness of knowing Him, to be a Person of
" an uncommon Genius, and possessed of every
" Quality which can render one Man agreeable to
" another."

Such is the Character given of our Author, *Richard Gwinnett, Esq; of Great-Shurdington, in Gloucestershire*, where this COMEDY was acted by a select Company of Neighbours; Mr. Gwinnett himself, playing the Part of *Ballance*, the 'Squire's Steward.

His Design, in composing this little Piece, was to reprehend a Spirit of Profuseness and Prodigality, which he found had gone forth in some Families, for whom he had the greatest Concern. And if a natural Description of the Persons represented; if a Detection of the mean Artifices by which unwary Country-Gentlemen are too frequently imposed on, together with the good Oeconomy throughout inculcated, are allowed to be, as they most certainly are, useful Notices, then will these *Scenes* be found equally *Pleasant* and *Profitable*. They were calculated for obtaining the Happiness of a Rural Life, in which the Author placed his sole Delight, and would indeed but ill become our Theatres, whereon, to please a depraved Taste, the Vices of the Times find the greatest Countenance.

And here, in farther Justice to this Gentleman's Character, we cannot but take Notice of the late agreeable and instructive Entertainment the Public have received from his Pen, as it is handsomely acknowledged in the following Letter sent from *Gloucester* to our Weekly Journalist, Aug. 30. 1731.

Mr. F O C,

IF Love and Honour, Morality and Philosophy, are Principles worth inculcating in this degenerate Age, I hope you will give me Leave to recommend a New Book to your Readers, wherein all who are virtuously inclined will find both Delight and Instruction, more especially the Fair Sex. The Book, I mean, is intituled, "PYLADES and CORINNA: Or, Memoirs of the Lives, Amours, and Writings of Richard Gwinnett, Esq; of Great-Shurdington in Gloucestershire, and Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas of Great Russel-street, Bloomsbury. Containing the whole Literary Correspondence which passed between them, during a Courtship of above sixteen Years.

In this Collection of Letters, the Passion of Love works upon, and breaks from CORINNA in the most moving and tender Expressions, in every Respect agreeable both to the Honour and Softness of her Sex. And tho' PYLADES endeavours frequently to conceal the Violence of his Flame under the sage Dictates of Philosophy, yet, in every Period, the Wound in his Heart is not only apparent, but, I find, proved mortal.

Now, to wave every Particular of their Amour, (tho' it is the most honourable and genteel one the Public was ever presented with) *Pylades* has communicated

P R E F A C E.

v

municated to his CORINNA many very useful Disquisitions wherewith he entertained his Solitude, and which helped to fill up some of those vacant Hours that hang upon a Country Life, and which, I think, as Mr. Norris expresses it, *were much more Accountably spent, than in beating about after News, or holding tedious and impertinent Chat about State Concerns.* His Descriptions of Rural Pleasures are very curious, and his Discussion of the Doctrine of *Predestination* is the most just I have ever read on that important Point. His Sentiments of Mr. *Locke*, and his Observations on Men and Books, are very curious, such as really proceed from a sound Judgment and a fine Imagination. The many diverting Stories and Relations of the Conversation which passed in some of the best Families in *Gloucestershire* must render this Work highly agreeable to our County. The Poem intitled *BEREFORD*, (which is a Description of the late Sir *Charles Duncombe's* Seat in *Wiltshire*.) is, in my Opinion, equal to any Attempt I have ever seen of the like Kind.

Familiar Letters are what we very much want, in that Class of *English* Literature. There is no Sort of Writing in which both Sexes have a freer Scope to shew either their Wit, their Humour, or their Gallantry, than in Letters: And of such the *French* have published the largest Collections; yet these of *PYLADES* and *CORINNA* are worth more than all of them put together, because those are wrote pretty much in the Spirit of Lewdness, whereas these, though they are a continued Display of the Passion of Love in all its Operations, contain a thousand irresistible Graces that are chaste and unsullied. In short, this Correspondence

dence between PYLADES and CORINNA consists of the best Letters I have met with in our Tongue. They are dictated from the Heart, are all wrote in the same unaffected Strain, and seem to have been employed in the Service of a refined and generous Friendship. In a Word, those of CORINNA are such as a Woman of Spirit and Virtue would write to a Man of Honour and true Gallantry. The Characters of Gentlemen and Ladies, wherever they are occasionally mentioned, are finely and justly drawn, and the Collections CORINNA has made, relating to the Existence of Spirits, Apparitions, Witchcraft, and other supernatural Acts, are some of the best I have seen of that Kind. I impatiently wait for the *Second Volume*, which is promis'd, and hope to find in the Library of every Person of Honour and Virtue, these excellent *Letters* of PYLADES and CORINNA.

Your humble Servant, PHILALETES.

In the Press, and speedily will be publish'd,

The HONOURABLE LOVERS: Being the Second and Last Volume of Love Letters, and other Miscellaneous Pieces, which pass'd between Mr. R. Gwinnett, and Mrs. E. Thomas, from 1709 to 1717, the Year in which *Pylades* died. With true Copies of his Last Will and Testament to *Corinna*; and of Her's to Him, constituting Him Her Executor.

N. B. In this Volume will be contained (among many other curious Particulars,) 1. The Remarks of *Pylades*, made in a Journey over several Parts of *England*, describing Gentlemen's Seats, their Collections of Pictures and Rarities of all Kinds worthy of Notice. 2. An Essay on the Excellency of Natural Religion. 3. On the Study of Philosophy, with his own Confession of Faith. 4. *Corinna's* Correspondence with the Pious and Learned Mr. *John Norris* of *Bemerton*, and other Persons of Distinction, &c. Price 5 s.

P R O-



PROLOGUE,

Spoken by SPIGGOT.

*'TIS said that Christmas comes but once a Year,
And when it comes, it always brings Good Cheer;
I wish your Stomachs may be Good, since We
Shall here present you with Variety.
Old Christmas, now, invites ye All to feast,
And I bid welcome thus to every Guest.*

*Welcome to Christmas therefore now ye be,
And many a joyful Christmas may ye see.
Besides, that We may give ye more Content,
Christmas, in Masquerade, We represent.
We can't tell how 'twill please, but this We'll say,
You are all kindly welcome to our PLAY.*

Dra-

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Dra-

Dramatis Personæ.

- Old Christmas.* A fat, unweildy, red-fac'd Country-Squire. His Coat stuck with Cards; a meet Voluptuary, who talks of nothing but Eating, Drinking, and Gaming. } *Morg. Jones.*
- Mimick.* A brisk, prating, impertinent Fellow, who runs into all Companies, ridicules their Words and Actions, and vexes them by his Apeish Tricks. } *Rob. Tutter.*
- Pinch-Gut.* A most avaricious old Miser, who grudges himself the common Necessaries of Life, but will gormandize at another's Table o' free Cost; a great Exclaimer against keeping up the Hospitality of *Christmas*; a mighty Pretender to Sobriety, merely to spare his own Purse. } *F. Githens.*
- Scrape.* An old Fidler. } *Tho. Clement.*
- Ballance.* A very sober Man, Steward to 'Squire *Christmas*; who by his Prudence interposes up on all Occasions, and keeps the Madness of the Company in tolerable Bounds. } *R. Gwinnett.*
- Squirrel,* Boy to the Steward.
- Scabbard.* An old Soldier, quarrelsome, testy, and for fighting every Body. } *F. Singleton.*
- Sauce-box.* Cook to 'Squire *Christmas*, peevish and passionate. } *T. Atkins.*
- Spiggot.* Butler to 'Squire *Christmas*, a sober genteel young Fellow, faithful in his Business, but tired of his Service from the Looseness and Intemperance he fees. } *R. Thornton.*
- Rag.* A sturdy impudent Beggar. } *P. Sutton.*
- Club.* Porter to 'Squire *Christmas*. } *Fer. Horton.*
- Flyblow.* A Parasite, and constant Guest, who pays for his Entertainment by his egregious Flattery of old 'Squire *Christmas*. } *Jo. Rogers.*
- Mrs. Gillflirt,* House-Keeper to 'Squire *Christmas*.

Constable and Attendants.

S C E N E. 'Squire *Christmas*'s House.



A

Christmas GAMBOL.

ACT I. SCENE I.

PINCH-GUT *and* SCRAPE.

PINCH-GUT.



ERY cold Weather; Times very hard, no Money stirring! if Things don't mend, one were e'en as good be hang'd, as stay any longer in this wretched Life. All the *Cow-clods* I gather'd in the Summer are burnt up; all the Sticks I pick'd from the 'Squire's Hedges quite spent; not a Rag about the House to stop a Hole in the Window: And what's worse, there was last Night but one Cattle of Cheese in the Cup-board, and this a Rat feloniously devour'd; all my present Comfort remains in one Half-loaf of Bread; and that, from brown, is chang'd into blue; a leaky Vessel has wasted all my *Cyder*, and Nature is grown such a close House-keeper, as to lock up all her Drink under Ice. But which is worst of all, opening lately my old Oaken-Coffer

B

in

A Christmas GAMBOL.

in the Garret, I found my Money look like my Bread; the Rain dribbling through a Crack in the Tiles, hath soaked through the Coffer, and I am afraid it will be destroy'd with Rust. Well, were it not for the Expence of a Coffin, and the Parson's Dues; and for fear of being eaten up by Worms, I could wish to be in my Grave.

[SCRAPE *plays at the Door, and PINCH-GUT stops his Ears in great Disquiet.*]

Who's there? Who's there? What Whoreson? What Rascal's that?

SCRAPE.

[*From the Door.*]

No Harm, Master; no Harm.

PINCH-GUT.

No nor any Good. How now, Sirrah; what are the Times so merry with ye?

SCRAPE.

Not so merry neither, as you may think; my Fiddle is oft upon a merry Pin, when poor Scrape's Heart is sad enough.

PINCH-GUT.

Why, what dost thou make this vile Noise for then?

SCRAPE.

Noise, Master! a vile Noise! sure you are a better Gentleman than to vilify Music so; 'tis one of the seven Liberal Sciences, Sir.

PINCH-

A Christmas GAMBOL.

?

PINCH-GUT.

Liberal Sciences! why how liberal is't? what dost get by't?

SCRAPE.

O many a fair Six-pence in a Year, especially at *Christmas* Holidays: Why, *Christmas* is no *Christmas* without Music.

PINCH-GUT.

O, if that be your Trade, you have mistook your House and your Man; here was never any *Christmas* here in my Memory. *Christmas* dost talk of? what to be eat and drunk quite out of Doors in twelve Days Time? Away, away, your Music is too liberal a Science for my Purse, and a very empty Sound to a Belly that wants Ears: I have more need of Meat (my self) than Music at present.

SCRAPE.

Nay, pray, Master, something for Pity sake; a Cup of Beer, a Piece of Bread and Cheese, or a Penny or Two-pence to buy a Pot of Drink at yonder Ale-house.

PINCH-GUT.

Hey day! I would I had known of your coming, and Bill of Fare. But you must excuse me, I never entertain'd any of your Profession before. I have a Neighbour hard by, who keeps *Christmas*, and his very Name is *Christmas* too. 'Squire

Christmas they call him. You may be welcome there, if you make Haste before another takes your Place.

SCRAPE.

Thank you, Master. I have heard of 'Squire *Christmas*; he is a brave Man, a jolly Companion among his Neighbours, a mighty House-keeper, and very liberal to the Poor.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, ay, the same; go, speed away, your liberal Science of Fidling, and his liberal Vanity of Spending, may make very good Music together, for aught I know.

[*Exeunt separatim. Pinch-gut, to the Lobby.*]



ACT I. SCENE II.

PINCH-GUT and RAG.

[RAG, at the Veil-Door, knocking and crying.

O What miserable Times be these? Cold, Hungry, Naked, a Life no Dog would lead, if he knew how to help himself!

[*Knocks again.*]

Enter PINCH-GUT.

Who's there? Who be ye? [*Hastily and angrily.*]

RAG.

A Christmas GAMBOLE.

5

R A G.

A Friend, Sir.

PINCH-GUT.

[Opening the Door.

Whence came ye? Whether be ye going?
What's thy Name? What dost want? [Hastily.

R A G.

Want! why (among other Things) I want both
Breath and Time to answer so many Questions.

PINCH-GUT.

Ha! you are pretty faucy, methinks; pray
what's your Business here?

R A G.

Business! Why you may easily see what my
Business is. I hope one may knock at a Gentle-
man's Door without any Harm.

PINCH-GUT.

So, all in the same Tune! I perceive you Wan-
derers come all out of one Nest: Here was a
Fidling-Rogue but now, and he meant no Harm
neither; that is, he would have had Bread, and
Drink, and Cheese, out of my House, and meant
no Harm all the while.

R A G.

Why, what do ye think poor Folks can live
upon Nothing?

B 3

PINCH-

PINCH-GUT.

They are like to find little better, if they knock at my Door.

R A G.

Perhaps so; for you look yourself, as if you had not eat a bit of good Victuals since last *Christmas*.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, Sirrah! say you So? I'm sure your Tongue runs as if you were much better fed than taught.

R A G.

As for Learning, I have been taught enough for my Calling; nor do I feed amiss (Thanks to good Gentlemen) but when I come to the Doors of Misers, who, having no Guts in their Brains, want Bowels for their own Bellies too; and live meaner than the worst of Beggars.

PINCH-GUT.

Sirrah! Sirrah! your Begging is but a Cover for greater Villany; you are but come to spy what Houses are fit to be robb'd, these long Winter-Nights.

R A G.

Sirrah me, no Sirrahs! I am as good a Man as your self, and as well born, and better bred: Villany do you say? I scorn your Words; rob your

A Christmas GAMBOL.

7

your House! of what? of a little rusty Pelf?
I have that in my Bag, which I value more than
all the Money in your House.

PINCH-GUT.

Nay, nay, Friend, I did but suppose.

R A G.

Suppose! and what have you to do to suppose Ill of One that you never saw before? What, I must be a Rogue because I am Poor it seems! but I shall take the same Liberty to suppose, that there is not a more cursed Villain upon Earth, than an old, withered, hunger-starv'd, covetous Hunk, that bears the greatest Curse of Poverty, in the Midst of Plenty.

PINCH-GUT.

Come, come, Friend, no hard Words, I love Peace, pray draw near, come in, what have you in your Bag?

R A G.

Why, what you never saw in your own Kitchen in your Life; why, here is a Rib or two of good Roast-beef, you old Rogue; the Carcase of a fat powder'd Goose, you Wretch; a lusty Piece of Pasty-Crust, you thin-jaw'd Knave.

PINCH-GUT.

Come, come, pugh, prithee forbear, I meant no Harm.

B 4

R A G.

R A G.

Rope take you for an old Miser, meant no Harm, do you say; I know you mean no Good to my Bag, but thou shalt not have a Morfel to save thy Life.

PINCH-GUT.

Come, come, honest Rag, dear Rag, thou hast enough; I will give thee an old crooked Fourpence-half-penny for the Carcase of the Goose; and help thee to a good House, where thou may'st get as much more. Come after me, dear Rag, come.

R A G.

A Bargain (Pinch-gut *Exit at the Lobby*) O what an execrable, old, filthy, beggarly Miser is this! that, being so rich, can bring his starv'd Appetite to the Food of a Beggar; and eat such Scraps as I have often thrown away under a Hedge.



A C T



ACT I. SCENE III.

PINCH-GUT and SPIGGOT.

PINCH-GUT.

T R O T H, who would have thought these common Beggars fare so well? there is none of them but see and smell (which is something) and eat more good Victuals in a Day, than I eat in a Twelve-month. Well, I am resolved to take my old Coat, which I bought at Second-hand, when King *Charles* came in, and go into some distant Country, and turn Beggar; for I am satisfy'd no People, from the Peer to the Peasant, live half so happy as they.

[SPIGGOT *knocks at the Veil-Door.*

Hark! what more Beggars still! I'll go and see.

[*Opens the Door, enter SPIGGOT.*

O, Mr. *Spiggot*, is it you? pray how does your Master, 'Squire *Christmas*?

SPIGGOT.

Very well, Mr. *Pinch-gut*; and has sent me to desire your Company at his House this *Christmas*.

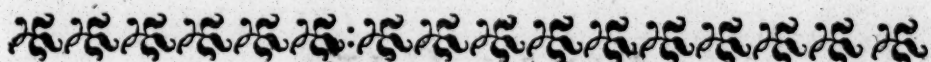
PINCH-GUT.

O, my very humble Service, and Thanks to him, I beseech you, dear Mr. *Spiggot*.

[*Exit Spiggot.*

Now

Now will I mend up my Coat for this Visit, it will be but the Charge of a little Thread; and by next Spring, when the Weather is warmer, and the Stitches begin again to wear out, I'll be going to find out my Friend Rag.



ACT I. SCENE IV.

SCABBARD, SPIGGOT, MIMICK, BALLANCE, and SAUCE-BOX.

SCABBARD.

WHAT's all Fighting at an End? is there no Rebellion carrying on? is there no Exercise for a Captain in the World? my Sword will grow rusty in a little Time, unless I find some Opportunity to use it. Well, I will never be the Ring-leader, though I long to hear of some Employment for a Soldier: But, however, since I have no Business of that sort, I will spend my Time another Way. This is *Christmas*, it seems, therefore I will be merry at Home, since I have nothing to do Abroad; but hang it, where shall I meet with a Place of good Entertainment? Men are grown so niggardly, and stingy, now a-days, that there is scarce One, in ten Parishes, makes any House-keeping. Indeed, here is 'Squire *Christmas*, hard by, keeps a good House, or else I do not know of One besides; and

I think, I have some Acquaintance with a Friend of his; and if I am not invited, I will make that my Pretence, and so keep my *Christmas* with him.

[To him Spiggot.

SPIGGOT.

O, Mr. *Scabbard*! I am very glad I have found you at last; I thought we should not have had your Company this *Christmas*. I have been looking after you this Hour, and could not hear of you for my Life. I was just ready to think you were gone a Soldiering again.

SCABBARD.

Troth, I think, I had as good go, as stay here; for we keep better *Christmas* at Camp than they do here, for aught I see.

SPIGGOT.

O, Sir, we shall keep a better *Christmas* than you are aware of; my Master has made great Provision against the Time.

SCABBARD.

I am glad to hear of it. I take thy Master to be an honest Gentleman. He is One that loves to keep up *Christmas*, and to make merry with his Neighbours. Pray, how does the old Gentleman do?

SPIG-

SPIGGOT.

He is very well, Sir, and would desire you to come and spend the Holidays with him.

SCABBARD.

Ay, that I will, sure, and thank you too, else I shall forget *Christmas*, for aught I see; therefore, pray give your Master Thanks, and tell him, he shall have the old Soldier's Company.

[Exit Spiggot.

This is like a Gentleman now, and I commend him for it. He loves to keep a good House, and I love to go to One; and so, I hope, we shall keep *Christmas* very merrily together.

Enter MIMICK.

MIMICK.

Sir, did you see Mr. *Spiggot* lately?

SCABBARD.

Why, what Business have you with him?

MIMICK.

O you need not ask such a Question as that, I love the *Spiggot* as well as you sometimes.

SCABBARD.

And better too, it may be, and what then?

MI-

MIMICK.

Come, Sir, I know you can relish a Cup of Ale as well as another; and therefore don't you make so strange at it.

SCABBARD.

I was never beholding to you for a Cup of Ale, however.

MIMICK.

No, I do not desire you should; but if you be not, others are, and so, I hope, I have some Friends.

SCABBARD.

More than thou dost deserve.

MIMICK.

But, methinks, Mr. *Scabbard*, you are a little out of Humour to Day. Come, this is not a Time to be melancholy; this is *Christmas*, Sir, the merriest Part in all the Year; and I hope you will not cross the Times.

SCABBARD.

What! dost think I am like thy self, to turn like a Weather-Cock? or that I went to School to the Vicar of *Bray*.

M I-

MIMICK.

No, Sir, you misapprehend my Meaning; which is this, that you will not thwart the Times when it is lawful to comply with them. Now this is the most joyful Time of all the Year; now all People are merry, and so I presum'd you would not be singular.

SCABBARD.

You have learnt the Art of turning every Thing, and Way too, I see: But what dost talk to me of this for? why dost not go about thy Business?

MIMICK.

O, it is time enough for that, I am not in such Haste, but that I can stay to talk a little.

SCABBARD.

It may be, you had better hold your Tongue.

MIMICK.

That is a hard Matter for me to do; for my Tongue's very slippery, and will oftentimes run whether I will or no.

SCABBARD.

Before thy Wit, I am sure it does now.

MI-

MIMICK.

If my Wit follows after, it is well enough.

SCABBARD.

Thou saucy Fool, thou hast never a Grain of Wit in thy Head.

MIMICK.

I know that, for all my Wit comes from my Tongue.

SCABBARD.

Thy Tongue says thou art a Fool; and I will hearken to thy silly Discourse no longer.

[*Exit in a Huff.*]

MIMICK.

What are you gone then? Joy go with you; for I will never send to fetch you back. This it is to be a Soldier. Like Butchers Dogs, they learn such an Habit of being furly, that they can never leave it all their Lives after. But let him go, and I wish I knew where to go too, that I might keep *Christmas* somewhat like. I would fain meet with this *Spiggot* (for 'Squire *Christmas* keeps a good House) and he would put his Master in mind of inviting One at the first Word. O, this is a brave Time for them, that are invited out for all the *Christmas* together. I wish I knew of a good House, where I might be welcome, they should not want my Company long; for I
love

love dearly to be merry with my Friends, when there's Occasion. I have most mind to 'Squire *Christmas*, if I could but tell how to get handsomely in, I warrant I would stand my Ground; and if I could but find this *Spiggot*, I should do well enough.

Enter SPIGGOT.

MIMICK.

Honest *Spiggot*, how dost do? how hast done this long while? I hope thy Master, old 'Squire *Christmas*, is well.

SPIGGOT.

He is very well, Sir, and says, he shall be glad of your Company these Holidays.

MIMICK.

And I shall be more glad of his. Pray give him my hearty Thanks, and tell him, I will wait upon him without fail. [Exit Mimick.]

SPIGGOT.

Well, these Twelve Days will seem to me like Twelve Years; such a tedious Drudgery am I like to endure; unless I can sleep as I walk, and with Eyes open; I know not what will become of my Brains before this Day Fortnight.

Enter

Enter BALLANCE.

BALLANCE.

What is the Matter Mr. Spiggot, are you not well?

SPIGGOT.

Truly, Sir, much tired with what I have done; and more at the Thoughts of what I am to do.

BALLANCE.

Have you invited all the Guests upon the List?

BALLANCE.

SPIGGOT.

All, but Mr. Flyblow, he is not to be seen, nor heard of.

BALLANCE.

Never be concerned for him, he has been a constant Guest ever since I was Steward; he may now plead Custom, and invite himself. I will undertake for his coming, if he be within any reasonable Distance; why, he is able to nose the Scent of a good House, as far as a Crow will Carrion; and, let the Wind but set fair, he will smell the Smoak of the Chimney at least Ten Miles off. But where is the Cook?

SPIGGOT.

Sir, he will be hear straight.

C

Enter

Enter SAUCE-BOX.

BALLANCE.

O, I wanted you. Has the Caterer furnished us with all Things for the Feast?

SAUCEBOX.

Sir, all in your Bill is provided; if you could provide me with Strength and Patience for this Twelve Days boiling, roasting, and baking; why, I am scarce recovered since this time Twelve-month.

BALLANCE.

Pray, *Spiggot*, do you see that the Cook be supplied with a Bottle of Wine, as oft as he has Occasion, that he may not faint in the Heat of his Business; and look you well to the Linen and the Plate; for some of our Guests have the Digestion of Rats and *Ostriches*; neither Hemp will choak them, nor Metal lie heavy upon their Stomachs. This Charge I leave with you, while I go to put all other Things in Order.

[Exit Ballance.]

SAUCEBOX.

Well, were it not for the Care and Discretion of this Man, no *Bedlam* was ever so mad a Place as this would be, during these twelve Days Revel.

SPIG-

SPIGGOT.

It luckily falls out, that when Men have great Estates, and little Wit (as it is our 'Squire's Fortune) they are furnished with Servants, who although born to inferior Business, yet carry in them that Sense, Honesty, and Prudence, as is rarely found in Persons of great Estates, and high Places.

SAUCEBOX.

But I hear them bounce at the Kitchen-Hatch; I must be going; you will remember me sometimes.

SPIGGOT.

Never fear, or else I should forget my self.

[Exit Saucebox.

It would be very hard if all the Country round come in to make merry at our Master's Cost, and we only should have our Labour for our Pains. But I must away to my Charge.





ACT II. SCENE I.

'Squire *Christmas's* Hall.

Enter MIMICK, SCABBARD, PINCH-GUT.

MIMICK.

COME, Mr. *Scabbard*, I hope you are in a better Humour now; come, we must be merry to Day, Thanks to the 'Squire.

SCABBARD.

Ay, with all my Heart, Mr. *Mimick*; Soldiers love to be merry at *Christmas*, if they be sad all the Year besides.

PINCH-GUT.

Indeed these be but sorry Times to be merry; for my Part I do not like this keeping of *Christmas*, not I; it is a great Charge and Trouble to no Purpose, and, Troth, Money does not come in so fast now, as to spend it at such a Rate.

SCABBARD.

But the 'Squire has a good Estate to maintain it, and what need he care for the Times, as long

long as he can make his Neighbours welcome, without any Damage to himself, why should not he do it? But look, here he is coming.

Enter CHRISTMAS.

How do you do, Mr. Pinch-gut? I am very glad to see you at my House; Sir, you are welcome to *Christmas*.

PINCH-GUT.

Thank you kindly, Sir, I am the more obliged to you for it.

CHRISTMAS.

This is a customary Thing, Sir, and therefore no Obligation at all.

PINCH-GUT.

Indeed, Sir, I take it as a very great One, for I always find good Entertainment here.

CHRISTMAS.

You are very welcome, Sir, to a small Commons with the rest of your Neighbours. But where is Mr. Scabbard? How has he done since last *Christmas*?

SCABBARD.

Very well, noble 'Squire. The old Soldier is come to keep *Christmas* with you once more.

*A Christmas GAMBOL.***CHRISTMAS.**

That is brave, and the old Soldier shall be
welcome ten Times more, if he will come.

SCABBARD.

Thank you, noble 'Squire, I still find it so.

CHRISTMAS.

But how go Squares with you now.

SCABBARD.

O, Sir, it never goes amiss with the old Sol-
dier.

CHRISTMAS.

That is brave indeed; but I shall forget Mr.
Mimick anon. O, Sir, you are welcome to
Christmas.

MIMICK.

Thank you, noble 'Squire, I am the more be-
holding to you.

CHRISTMAS.

But where do You spend your Time; we never
have your Company hardly?

MIMICK.

I am sometimes in one Place, and sometimes
in another; but at your Service, 'Squire, at all
Times.

CHRIST-

CHRISTMAS.

O, I thank you, Sir, but pray how do my Servants mind their Business, I know you cast an Eye upon them sometimes?

MIMICK.

Indeed, Sir, I think there is never a Gentleman in *England* has better Servants than you have, Sir.

CHRISTMAS.

I am glad to hear of it. But pray, Gentlemen, what News do you hear?

SCABBARD.

News, Sir! there is but little stirring, I think.

MIMICK.

And when there is any, it is commonly half Lies; so that one does not know how to give any Credit to it.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, indeed, so it is, and I think they be great Fools that spend their Money at the Coffee-Houses to hear News; methinks they might find a better Use for it, than to lay it out upon Lies.

Enter BALANCE.

Sir, all the Guests are come, and Dinner is up-
on the Table, if you will be pleased to walk in.

CHRISTMAS.

We are just coming. Come, Gentlemen, will
you walk in to Dinner, and let News alone till
another Time. *[Exeunt.]*



ACT II. SCENE II.

SCRAPE and RAG.

SCRAPE.

A Rope take all Rebels; a Mischief light on
the Pates of such ambitious Fools, as draw
such Numbers of poor silly Fellows to Ruin and
Beggary; only that they may get a Name, and
sit some few Inches higher than other Mortals.

[Stooping down, and stroaking his lame Leg.]

To him RAG.

Bless us! What have we here?

SCRAPE.

How now, Friend! Who be you?

RAG.

R A G.

Who am I ! that is a Question I do not use to answer, but to such as will pay me for it.

PINCH-GUT.

Is it then so much worth to know who you are ?

R A G.

If One that is known to so many Lords, Knights, and 'Squires, may be valued upon that Account, I think, I do not much over-rate myself.

SCRAPE.

Lords, Knights, and 'Squires! as if it were worth so much Pride to be known to them. Why, no Men have commonly more sordid Acquaintance than they; Buffoons, Parasites, Sycophants, Flatterers, Pimps, Hectors, Gamesters, and such like Creatures, of the basest Spirits, vilest Inclinations, and most profligate Lives imaginable, are usually their Attendants and Favourites; while Men of Sense, and Honour, scorn to be Slaves to such mean and despicable Conversation.

R A G.

[*Aside.*

Hab! he talks like a shrewd Fellow, and one that understands the World; I were best be plain and fair with him.]

Come, Friend, since we are so luckily met, the sooner we are acquainted the better; I fancy
we

we are Brothers of the same Trade, and may quickly understand one another without any Jealousy. Pray who are ye? whence came ye?

SCRAPE.

I have been asked that Question by a Justice sometimes, or a Constable; what are you the King of Beggars, that you are so peremptory?

R A G.

It may be so, and no small King neither, if you understood the Nature of our Government.

SCRAPE.

I have heard something of it, indeed, while I have been shaving Gentlemen of Quality.

R A G.

O, then you have been a Barber in your Time, I find.

SCRAPE.

You are in the Right, I have shaved Beards in a Town in *Somersetshire*, heretofore; and then my Name was *Mohair*, well known among the Gentry of those Parts.

R A G.

Well, since you deal so plainly, I shall be as free with you. But pray why in this Habit now?

SCRAPE.

SCRAPE.

Why, to make short, I ran into *Monmouth's* Colours, got a Wound in my Leg, as I was getting off to save my Neck, and ever since, I have travelled up and down with a Fiddle, and (excepting my Lameness) I never liv'd better in all my Life.

RAG.

I thought I had over-heard you cursing Rebels, as I was coming in.

SCRAPE.

Ay, that was because the Rebellion did not prosper. Why, you Fool, if the Duke had been King, I should have been a Lord long before now, and might have kept a Barber and a Fidler too, as my Servants; and my Lameness had been then a Mark of Honour: Look there (the People would say) there goes my Lord *Mohair*, that was wounded in the *West*, and fought so bravely to deliver us from Popery and Slavery.

RAG.

It is true, indeed, but I think it is much better as it is; for no Rebellion ever prospered long; thou mightest have lorded it, perhaps, for four or five Years, and yet have been hanged at last.

SCRAPE.

Nay, I have no liking at all to Rebellion in my Heart, but they talked of Liberty and Property, and

and raised mighty Out-cries against Popery; and said, the Law of Self-Preservation was above all other Laws; and that drew me in among them.

R A G.

Ay, ay, I know enough of that in our own Way of Government; we have such Mutineers ever and anon among us too, but we take a quick Way with them; we lead them into a Wood, tie them to a Tree, with their Hands behind them; hang a Crust of Bread and Cheese just before them, and when every One of the Company has put half a score Lice into his Neck, we leave him to perish with Vermin and Famine.

SCRAPE.

And very justly too; if you manage your Government in all Points like this, there is not a wiser Policy upon Earth, than that of the Beggars; and of which I should desire to be a Member.

R A G.

More of that another Time, when we are better acquainted; mean while to the present Business. I perceive you and I are going to the same Place, and upon the same Design; let me see how you can perform your Part in This, and by that I shall guess at your Abilities in other Things. It is no small Skill to be a compleat Beggar.

SCRAPE.

A Christmas GAMBOL.

29

SCRAPE.

Well, I am content to be tried, my present Ability lies most in the Fiddle; they call me Scrape, because of my Skill upon that Instrument, and there are few I will turn my Back to, as to that Point.

RAG.

For my Part, I cannot make much Music with my Fingers; but at an old Song or two, I dare venture my self in any Company.

SCRAPE.

As well suited as can be, dear Rag, thee for the Voice, and I at the Instrument; a most harmonious Concert shall thee and I make. Come along with me, my Fiddle lies at a little Ale-house hard by, there we will go and practise, and then away to the Squire's.

RAG.

Thou art a pretty towardly Fellow I perceive Scrape; thou may'st come to Good in Time, with some Instruction; and therefore I will tell thee one Secret in the Mystery of Begging; That it is the best Way, in this Sort of Game, to hunt by Couples.

SCRAPE.

Ay, Troth, so I thought; the best Scrap never relish'd with me alone; I was ever wishing for a Com-

Companion, and think my self extreamly fortunate in meeting with thee, dear Rag; thou wilt find me very tractable and faithful; but let us make Haste to our Business.



ACT II. SCENE III.

Enter FLYBLOW.

WHAT, is Dinner over? nay, then I am come too late, the worst Time in all the Day. This is very unlucky, indeed; there be but *three Times** in the World, and I have happened upon the worst of all. It vexes me that I should be such a Fool, as to stay so long, and never observe Dinner-time no better. Well, now I see by Experience, that it is worse coming at the latter End of a Feast, than the Beginning of a Fray; but I am sure it would have been better for me, if I could have learned it without a Tryal; for then I should have partaken of the 'Squire's Hospitality; but now, for aught I know, must kiss the Hare's Foot. But, on my Word, it is not a Thing to jest at; for I am sure my Belly will make me sensible of the Loss of it before Supper, if I do not get a Bit to stay my Stomach.

* Alluding to the Speech of Fryar Bacon's Brazen-Head, *viz: Time is, Time was, Time's past.*

A Christmas GAMBOLE.

11

mach. They say half an Hour's quickly lost at Dinner, but, I think, I have lost the whole Dinner-time in less than a Quarter, or else my Belly is not a true Clock. Well, I will learn to be wiser hereafter, and take Time by the Fore-Lock, for I see it is bald behind.

Enter BALLANCE.

Your Servant, Mr. *Flyblow*, I am sorry you came so late, that we had not your good Company at Dinner; I assure you, my Master was very desirous of it.

FLYBLOW.

Well, Mr. *Ballance*, the 'Squire's Kindness is never the less for my being absent; and if I had been here I am sure I should have been welcome, and that is some Comfort to me however, tho' I could wish with all my Heart I had came time enough to Dinner, for the 'Squire is of such a generous Temper, that he makes all People welcome at *Christmas*.

BALLANCE.

Ay, Sir, and since you are come too late, we will endeavour to repair the Loss of your Company by a more civil Treatment: For my Master has commanded me to take care that all People who come to his House, may never go away dissatisfied, for want of due Respect.

FLY-

FLYBLOW.

Ay, I know very well, your Master is a brave Man: He loves to make Entertainments for his Neighbours, and Friends, and had rather lay out his Money with some Credit, than do no Good with it. I am sure he has not his Fellow in this County, nor the next neither, I believe. He is a true Gentleman, and shews himself so in every Thing that he does. And if all Men were dignified according to their Merits, he deserves the Title of Lord, rather than 'Squire.

BALLANCE.

But, Sir, I must beg your Pardon, that you were not invited, as you should have been; but it was not thro' any Neglect or Carelessness I assure you, for your Name was in the List, and you were sought for very diligently; but it seems, Sir, you could not be found, or else, Sir, you should not have wanted any Invitation.

FLYBLOW.

There needs no Excuse, Mr. *Ballance*, where there is no Fault; if there be any, it is altogether mine, for being out of the Way, and therefore I ought to bear the Blame, but you must excuse me too, for there was a Necessity in the Case, my Business was the Occasion of my Absence, and you know that must not be neglected.

BALLANCE.

Well, Sir, but you have had nothing since you came, I will go and acquaint my Master that you are come.

[*Exit Ballance.*]

FLYBLOW.

This it is to get the Love of Gentlemens Servants, if their Master should at any Time chance to forget one, they will not; tho' indeed I can never blame 'Squire *Christmas* of Forgetfulness, especially in those Things which belong to Hospitality, and Generosity. But I hear them coming.

Enter 'Squire CHRISTMAS, Captain SCABBARD, PINCH-GUT, MIMICK, *With Attendants.*

CHRISTMAS.

O, Mr. *Flyblow*, I was afraid we should have been deny'd your good Company these Holidays, it is the first Time you ever came to us so late.

FLYBLOW.

Most noble and magnificent 'Squire, you honour me exceedingly, by that great Concern you exprefs for my Presence, before this worthy Company, it is not for lack of Zeal to your Service.

MIMICK.

[*Aside.*]

No, nor of Zeal to good Sauces, that I came not at a more seasonable Hour.

D

CHRIST-

CHRISTMAS.

Ho, ho, ho ; no, no, good Mr. *Flyblow*, I question not your hearty Friendship ; but would not a Leg of a fat Capon relish better upon your Tongue at this Time, than a long Compliment ?

FLYBLOW.

O, Sir, I am so rejoyc'd to see you well, that I neither feel any Fatigue of my Journey, nor the least Sense of Hunger, or Cold, since I enjoy your Presence.

MIMICK.

[*Aside.*]

O the intolerable Fulsomeness of this Fop !

CHRISTMAS.

Ah dear, Mr. *Flyblow*, I know you have ever had a true Love for me, you have shewn it in all your Words.

MIMICK.

[*Aside.*]

But in no Actions, except Eating, Drinking, and Cringing.

FLYBLOW.

Most worshipful 'Squire, it is what you deserve from all that know, and are able to extol your Merits in great and becoming Language.

CHRIST-

CHRISTMAS.

What a well hung Tongue he has? [*to the Company*] there is scarce a Man, I believe, Captain *Scabbard*, in all your Travels and Acquaintance, to be compar'd with him.

SCABBARD.

As for Tongues well hung, by your Favour, 'Squire, I never mind them; I had rather see a Man's Sword well hung, and upon Occasion well drawn; for in our Way, it is not prating, but doing, that we value.

PINCH-GUT.

The Proverb says, Fair Words butter no Parsnips. And tho', worthy 'Squire, such soft Language may please after Dinner; yet I fancy, Mr. *Flyblow*, himself, feels little Comfort in talking upon an empty Stomach.

MIMICK.

No, no, you are out there; Mr. *Flyblow* is a Person of more Civility, than to be hungry out of Season, although he had fasted Twenty-four Hours. You measure other People's Stomachs by your own, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*, I dare say he has no Sense of Hunger, or Cold, or Weariness: He has more Respect for the 'Squire, than to think of his Belly so soon, altho' he were half starv'd.

FLYBLOW.

Mr. *Mimick*, my old dear and loving Acquaintance, your humble Servant, dear Mr. *Mimick*, I beg your Pardon, that being so entirely taken up in all my Faculties, with the Sight and Conversation of the noble 'Squire, I should seem to neglect a Person of your great and admir'd Merit.

MIMICK.

My great and admir'd Merit! you are the first (as I know) that ever admir'd my Merit. For I must not account my self of that Number, since the most worthless Wretch in the World, who undervalues all others, has still Candour enough to think well of himself. But truly, Mr. *Flyblow*, that Character, which you (in great Civility) gave of me to my Face, does not a little puff me up, and I shall have a greater Esteem for my self ever hereafter.

FLYBLOW.

Sir, I ever abhor'd the malicious Wit, and detestable Humour of those satyrical People, who cannot endure that any Man should have a good Opinion of himself; I love to acknowledge the least Degree of Merit wherever I find it.

CHRISTMAS.

You need not have said this in your own Behalf, Mr. *Flyblow*, I can testify for your Civility as much as any Man; it is this obliging Carriage
that

that makes you welcome here at all Times; and who would keep a good House, and be at so great Expence as I am, if he were never to hear any Commendation or Applause for his Liberality. But d'ye hear [*to the Attendants*] call *Spiggot* hither somebody; Mr. *Flyblow*, I must desire you to accept of the poor Remains of a short Dinner, we will endeavour to treat you better at Supper.

Enter SPIGGOT.

Tell the Steward it is my Pleasure Mr. *Flyblow* may want no Entertainment the House can give him. He came a long Journey in the Cold this Morning, give him a Flask of *Montefiasco*, out of the inward Wine-Cellar, and bid Mrs. *Gillfirt* (the House-Keeper) wait upon him with a Cordial out of her Closet.

FLYBLOW.

Thank you, noble Sir, I could well have stayed till Supper, but I can do any thing for your Pleasure; which to gratify, is to me beyond all the Delicacies of Eating and Drinking.

[*Exit* Flyblow, Spiggot.

MIMICK.

If I had you in my Keeping a little, I should spoil your complimenting, and make you eat and drink with the same Appetite as other Mortals do.

SCABBARD.

He was never a Soldier in his Life, I warrant him, else he would not have been so shy about Eating.

PINCH-GUT.

He may be excused for being so demure; he haunts so many Gentlemens Houses, and is cloyed with so much Feasting, all the Year round, that he never knows what it is to be hungry; he makes but one *Christmas* in a Year, but it lasts twelve Months together.

MIMICK.

If he were but to board with you, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*, for a few Weeks, I believe he would better understand on what Side his Bread was butter'd. You would teach him, as you do your Rats, to feed upon Faggot-Sticks.

PINCH-GUT.

Sir, you need not upbraid me with my House-keeping, I keep no Food for Rats nor Mice, and as little for such Vermin, as Buffoons and Mimicks.

CHRISTMAS.

Nay, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*, but you are a little too hasty, this is a Time to jest and be merry; this *Mimick's* a Wag that will spare no Body when his Belly is full; not the Master of the House himself

self shall 'scape him. But come, to divert this Discourse, we will take a Walk, it is healthful after Dinner to stir gently; and here is Captain *Scabbard* will be pleas'd to see the House, and take a Prospect of its Situation.

SCABBARD.

Sir, I shall take it as a Favour.

CHRISTMAS.

I hope you will be so well acquainted with my Habitation and House-keeping (such as they are) as no longer to be a Stranger to this Place.

SCABBARD.

Your Civility would even make a Soldier reply like a Flatterer, tho' he were ever so sincere.

MIMICK.

No, pray leave that Part to Mr. *Flyblow*; you shall see how slick the Knave will look by and by, when his Skin is fill'd with good Victuals, and his Tongue hath been dipt in Mrs. *Gillfirt's* Cordial; I doubt, 'Squire, you were a little too kind to trust your House-keeper with such a slippery Gamester.

SCABBARD.

Sir, Methinks you prate somewhat saucily sometimes, and I shall not bear to hear the 'Squire flouted in his own House.

CHRISTMAS.

No, no, good Captain, don't be concern'd, 'tis a Wag, a very Wag, poh, poh, poh; you may as well gag a Goose, as go about to stop his Tongue. I heard his Grandmother say, that he began to talk at three Months old, 'tis as natural to him, as —

MIMICK.

'As for an old bulky 'Squire to break Wind, when he has over-fill'd his Gut.

CHRISTMAS.

D'ye hear there?

SCABBARD.

No, I perceive he can't forbear.

MIMICK.

No more than an old Soldier can his Oaths and Wenches.

CHRISTMAS.

But come, my Friends, pray let us divert ourselves with a little stirring.

MIMICK.

Ay, good Sir, do, in Pity to Mr. *Pinch-Gut* there; for unless his Dinner be a little jogg'd down, 'twill all up again. How d'ye, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*, are n't you well?

PINCH-

PINCH-GUT.

A little qualm over my Stomach.

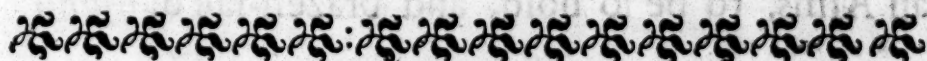
MIMICK.

Alas, poor Man, your Stomach is so little acquainted with good Victuals, that it is almost as bad as Poison to you.

CHRISTMAS.

Here [*to the Attendants*] go on before; unlock the Doors of the long Gallery, open the folding Window at the Balcony. Come, Gentlemen.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]



ACT II. SCENE IV.

Enter SCRAPE and RAG.

RAG.

TROTH, *Scrape*, if I can sing no better than you can play, we shall make but sorry Music on't.

SCRAPE.

O, never fear, dear *Rag*, what we can't do by Art, we'll make out by Impudence.

RAG.

R A G.

Well, I see, whatever thou art for a Fidler, thou wilt quickly make a good Beggar, for that is the main Thing in our Trade.

S C R A P E.

What, to be Impudent.

R A G.

Ay, to know how to stare a Gentleman in the Face well, and never be bashful.

S C R A P E.

But, methinks, it is a Shame for One that asks an Alms, to be so bold, and brazen-fac'd.

R A G.

O, we must not stand upon Modesty and Manners; but if we see they're a little hard-fisted, never let them alone till we have quite wearied them with our Importunity.

S C R A P E.

Then, I hope, we shall be the better prepar'd to deal with the 'Squire; and if he does not like our Music, we will tire him with our Impudence.

R A G.

Thou art in the Right, *Scrape*, there is nothing to be done without it: If it were not for
this

this we must pack up our Tools, and leave off Begging, for we should have but small Encouragement to follow it.

SCRAPE.

Well, dear Rag, I am heartily glad that I was so lucky as to meet with thee; for we agree in every Thing-as well as I could wish.

RAG.

If we didn't agree in This, we had as good teach an Ass to make a Third in our Music, as ever expect to get any thing. O there's nothing like being Importunate; it forces Men to bestow their Money with their Hands, when their Hearts are unwilling.

SCRAPE.

Well, Rag, I hope we shall be pretty well skill'd in this Lesson, however; but if we do not make haste, we shall have some Body or other strike in before us, and then all our Preparation will come to nothing; therefore let us go on.

Enter PINCH-GUT, *meeting them.*

PINCH-GUT.

Who is here? what my old Friend Rag, and Scrape the Fidler!

RAG.

Ay, Master, the same.

PINCH-

PINCH-GUT.

Why, whither are you going?

SCRAPE.

We are just going to the 'Squire's,

PINCH-GUT.

What to do?

SCRAPE.

To play him a Strain this *Christmas*. We understand he keeps a Feast to Day, and so I hope our Music will be welcome.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, by and by, I don't know what it may be, but at present the 'Squire's out of hearing, and so it will be your best Way to stay a little,

RAG.

Well, Master, how d'ye like the Bargain that I sold you out of my Bag this Morning?

PINCH-GUT.

O, Rag, it was the sweetest Morfel that ever I eat in my Life; but, now I am ready to spew at the Thoughts of eating.

RAG.

Why, what's the Matter, Master, are you not well?

PINCH-

PINCH-GUT.

No, I am as sick as a Dog.

RAG.

How so, Master?

PINCH-GUT.

I din'd at the 'Squire's to Day, and there, being seldom used to such Dainties, I over-eat myself; and now I wish it was all up again.

SCRAPE.

Truly, Master, a great Dinner lies very uneasy upon one's Stomach, and there's nothing worse than Excess.

PINCH-GUT.

O, it is the most destructive to Health of any thing in the World; and, I believe, there are fewer destroy'd by the Sword, than by Intemperance.

RAG.

And how happy are we then, Master, who are free from Both these Destroyers.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, Rag, since I dealt with Thee, I have been often contemplating the Happiness of thy Condition.

RAG.

R A G.

You can never know it well but by Experience; we are never subject to Excess, and yet have enough; we are not cloy'd with one Dish, but feasted with Variety; we still enjoy the fresh Air, which is better than Physic, and are always stirring, and that makes us always healthy.

P I N C H - G U T.

Truly, *Rag*, I am very much in love with your Manner of Life.

R A G.

You would admire it more and more, if you were but a little acquainted with the Advantages of it.

P I N C H - G U T.

Pray, *Rag*, let me know them then.

R A G.

O, they are more than can be number'd; we pay no Taxes, are never careful how to get House-Rent, we have no Family to provide for, we are never in want of Doctors, nor ever oppress'd with any of those Charges, which other People always endure, and many other Benefits, which Experience will fully declare.

P I N C H -

PINCH-GUT.

Well, now I am thoroughly satisfied, that there is no Condition more pleasant and delightful, than that of a Beggar. Men may talk of Lords, and Knights, and 'Squires, but they are all no more than Slaves in Comparison of a Beggar :

Tho' they themselves with Ease and Plenty cloy ;
A Beggar does the happiest Life enjoy.



ACT



A C T III. S C E N E I.

BALLANCE, FLYBLOW, PINCH-GUT.

BALLANCE.

S I R, I am afraid your Haste has made you rise with half a Dinner.

FLYBLOW.

No more Haste than good Speed, Mr. *Ballance*, I can eat on both Sides, when there is Occasion.

BALLANCE.

I hope, Sir, there was enough of what you lik'd, and no want of due Respect and Attendance; you know I cannot be in all Places at once, and had not very urgent Business called me aside, so welcome a Friend of my Master's should have had all the Service I could have paid him.

FLYBLOW.

Sir, there was great Plenty of the best Sort, and admirably well dress'd. Such Venison; Such a Chine of Beef; Such Brawn; Such Fowl, in a Word, Such of every Thing, as the whole Country round, no, nor all the World about, is able to exceed.

BAL-

BALLANCE.

I am glad there was any thing could stay your Stomach till Supper ; for 'tis not great and costly Entertainment my Master aims at ; 'tis not the pampering of the Body, nor the Encouragement of Excess that is intended by this open House-keeping ; but my Master having a fair Estate, and being an old Batchelor, has for many Years (as you are sensible, Mr. *Flyblow*) employ'd the Hospitality of his House for the promoting of Friendship and good Neighbourhood : You will see the most ingenious and well-bred Men of the Country here, before the Holidays are over ; and the most civil and genteel Conversation, without immoderate Drinking, Gaming for Money, or any of those lewd Diversions, which the Rabble call keeping of *Christmas*.

FLYBLOW.

All This, Mr. *Ballance*, I have observ'd, and 'tis owing wholly to your Discretion, that your Master's Magnificence has gain'd so great a Reputation among all who are Wise and Sober ; but yet with all your Care, 'tis scarce possible to prevent every Disorder at such a Time, when the Generality intirely devote themselves to Licentiousness.

BALLANCE.

I own 'tis hard, but then we are the more Nice in our Invitations, never suffering any Persons of quarrelsome Tempers, or lewd Conversations,

E

to

to appear among us: Sometimes, perhaps, a Stranger unawares intrudes himself, and has put us to Trouble, but that has been very seldom; and to tell you my Fear, I am a little doubtful lest Captain *Scabbard* may at this Time occasion us some Disturbance. He is, I perceive, a very quarrelsome old Soldier, and ready to draw upon the least wry Word that offends him.

FLYBLOW.

Let me alone to humour him; he must be very peevish, whom I am not able to please.

Enter PINCH-GUT.

PINCH-GUT.

Your Servant, good Mr. Steward. Pray where is the 'Squire, and the rest of the good Company? and yet some of them not so good neither as they should be.

BALLANCE.

O, Sir, I thought you had been with them. They are gone to see the House, and observe the Situation of the Country round it. Captain *Scabbard* is a Stranger, and 'tis for his Sake chiefly this Walk was design'd.

PINCH-GUT.

Stranger d'ye say! and so he should ever have been here, if the House were mine. Butchers and common Executioners are more safe and civil Company than Soldiers. Wolves and Beasts of
Prey,

Prey, that kill and eat for Hunger, are more tolerable than such Suckers of Man's Blood, who destroy the Lives of Men for Hire. Instead of a Scarf about his Middle, a Rope about his Neck would become him better.

FLYBLOW.

Sir, if your Passions are so easily mov'd, and your Aversions to this Captain are so violent, it will be much Prudenter for you to forbear his Company, and prevent the Danger of a Fray.

BALANCE.

Wise Men, when engag'd in such boisterous Company, use to say little or nothing, and bear Affronts with Patience. Words are nothing if you will but let them die.

PINCH-GUT.

I verily think he was the Man that rifled my House of Two Flitches of Bacon, and half a Dozen Cheeses in *Monmouth's* Rebellion, for which Loss I have fare'd the worse, having never dar'd to keep such a Stock of Provision by me ever since. No Rebel shall eat of my Bacon again if I can help it; let them seek their Pay of the Devil, that set them to Work.

BALANCE. [*To Flyblow.*]

'Tis true, indeed, what Mr. *Pinch-Gut* says; he was deep in that Insurrection.

FLYBLOW.

I wonder then, 'Squire *Christmas*, who is a Loyal Gentleman, would invite him at such a public Time.

BALLANCE.

'Twas by Accident, and only to pay some Respect to a Friend of my Master's, from whom the Captain lately brought a Recommendation.

PINCH-GUT.

Well, could I but see the 'Squire, and return my Thanks, I would take my Leave.

FLYBLOW.

I should be glad also to wait on him, the less I enjoy of him, the more I feel the Weariness of my Journey.

BALLANCE.

Come, Gentlemen, I'll conduct you to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT

ACT III. SCENE II.

Enter CLUB, RAG, SCRAPE, and BALLANCE.

CLUB at the Door, RAG and SCRAPE knocking there.

CLUB.

WHO's there?

RAG and SCRAPE.

Bless the noble 'Squire *Christmas*.

[*Rag sings, and Scrape Plays, but Club disturbs 'em.*]

CLUB.

What noisy Rascals be these that come to disturb the House?

RAG.

Rascals! Why, what a great Officer are you, that you are so free of your Compliments? Sir, we are no Rascals, no more than your Portership.

CLUB.

Not a Minute of an Hour that one can be quiet from Morning to Midnight.

SCRAPE.

Are not ye paid for it?

CLUB.

Not by such Rascals as you are.

E 3

RAG.

R A G.

Why, prithee what Difference is there between a Porter and a Beggar? thou get'st thy Vails within the Gate, and we ours without; a Pedlar with a Quarter-Staff is a better Man every Hour of the Day; for he has his Liberty, but thou art tied here to the Door like a Tanner's Dog, and dar'st not stir a Foot, for fear of losing thy Place.

C L U B.

Sirrah, you are an impudent brazen-fac'd Rogue; my Master's a Justice of Peace, I'll acquaint him what Company he has at his Door presently.

Enter BALLANCE. [*To Club.*]

What is the Noise here?

C L U B.

Why, here's a Brace of the most impudent harden'd Rogues that ever I saw in my Life; undoubtedly they have lately broke some Jail, and are now running away to cheat the Gallows.

B A L L A N C E.

Let's see 'em, call 'em in.

Enter R A G. [*Scrape just within the Door bowing.*]

How now, my Friends, Whence came you? what are you?

R A G.

Worthy Sir, we are a Couple of honest Travelers, who having heard of the Fame of this House
for

for Hospitality, and Liberality, are come to pay our Respects to you.

CLUB.

To see what you can get.

RAG.

And what dost thou stand for there, thou long-fided Thief, but to see what thou canst get?

BALLANCE.

Hold, Friend, you are a little too forward in your Language.

RAG.

Most noble 'Squire, I should be sorry to deny any due Honour to my Betters.

BALLANCE.

You mistake, Friend, I am but Servant to the 'Squire you mean.

SCRAPE.

Your courteous and affable Carriage shews you to be a Person of Quality, and that you well deserve to be what we mistook you for. You may perceive we can distinguish between a well-bred Gentleman and a Porter.

CLUB.

False, dissembling Villains! they would cut a Gentleman's Throat for Eighteen Pence.

B A L L A N C E.

Hold, *Club*, hold, you are a little too sharp upon 'em ;
[Aside, these Fellows were never born, nor bred Beggars.]

But d'ye hear, honest Travellers, whence came ye?

S C R A P E.

I lately came from *Ireland*, and am by Trade a Barber; a West-Country Man by Birth, and being bound for a Friend, was forc'd to hide and get my Living by my Music, 'till I can compound with my Creditor.

B A L L A N C E.

And what are you, Friend?

R A G.

Sir, I am a Gentleman, tho' in this Garb; a younger Brother of a good Family that is now decay'd.

B A L L A N C E.

Well, I wish 'twere better for you both. *[To Club.]* Here, Porter, let 'em stay quietly; 'tis not for my Master's Honour, that any should be ill-treated at his Gates. *[To Rag and Scrape]* Stay, Friends, hereabouts, if you are good at your Music, you may get a Spill by and by, when the Company's at Leisure. *[Exit Ballance.]*

R A G.

See the Difference between a Gentleman and an ill-bred Ruffian.

CLUB.

CLUB.

Sirrah, leave your Snarling, or else I shall lay you over the Pate for all this; if Mr. *Ballance* be Steward, I am Porter, and know my Business without his Directions.

SCRAPE.

Pray, Mr. Porter, don't take it ill, my Companion is a little passionate, but is as honest a Fellow at Heart, as ever travell'd the King's Highway.

CLUB.

If you can be civil you may fare the better. Come this Way, the 'Squire's a coming, 'tis not fit you should be here. [*Exeunt omnes.*]



ACT III. SCENE III.

Enter BALLANCE, CHRISTMAS, SCABBARD, FLY-BLOW, PINCH-GUT, MIMICK, SCRAPE, RAG. With Attendants.

CHRISTMAS.

COME, Gentlemen, now 'twill be acceptable to you to rest yourselves; 'twas not [*To Scabbard.*] Captain, to boast of any thing extraordinary in my House, that I gave you the Trouble of this Walk. Usefulness and Convenience directed us in the Model of the Building, and our Furniture aims at no more than decent Plainness.

SCAB-

SCABBARD.

Sir, if you have pleas'd your self therein, you need not care what others say. What a Pox, can't a Man with his own Money build a House according to his own Fancy, but he must be bound to satisfy every impertinent Fop about the Reason of his Contrivance? Were the House mine, 'Squire, I would like it in Defiance to all Censurers; and those that were not pleas'd with it, might e'en keep out on't.

FLYBLOW.

'Tis not in the Architecture of this House that a curious Observer will find the greatest Beauty, but in the prudent Oeconomy, and discreet Management of the Affairs of so great, and yet so orderly a Family.

MIMICK.

Seriously, Mr. *Flyblow* has by his metaphorical Paint, and rhetorical Flowers, and gilded Language set off the House to Admiration; I don't question (if he were to go on) he would make *Windsor-Castle*, or *Versailles*, or thê *Escorial*, or *Solomon's Temple*, but a Pig-sty to it.

SCABBARD.

Damn him for a daubing, sneaking Parasite, his Tongue is fit for nothing but to wipe one's Arse with.

BAL-

BALLANCE.

Sir, this Gentleman is my Master's old Acquaintance, and you but a Stranger here; pray suffer him to commend the House wherein he has been so often kindly treated, and you yourself now generously receiv'd.

PINCH-GUT.

Worthy 'Squire, some Occasions call me hence, with my humblest Thanks for your Civility, I beg your Leave now to depart.

CHRISTMAS.

O, Mr. Pinch-Gut, you are a near Neighbour, and you must sup with us by all means.

[Scrape and Rag at the Door, but unseen.]

SCRAPE and RAG.

Bless the noble 'Squire Christmas.

[They sing and play.]

CHRISTMAS.

Who are these?

BALLANCE.

You shall see them, if you please, Sir.

CHRISTMAS.

Call them in.

Enter SCRAPE and RAG.

MIMICK.

Hah! what have we here, a lame Fidler? I'll warrant this Fellow has been in the Wars, and
having

having receiv'd an unlucky Brush in the Gammons, has since turn'd his Whinyard into a Fiddle. What think you, Captain?

SCABBARD.

I think you are a saucy Fellow, to call a Sword a Whinyard; if thou hadst ever the Courage to wear one, or feel the Edge of it, thou wouldst have given the Weapon a more honourable Name.

MIMICK.

Sword, Weapon, any thing, good Captain, I'll call it what you please, so I may neither wear it, nor feel it.

CHRISTMAS.

Be not offended, Captain, you take Provocations where none are intended. But how came you to be lame Friend?

SCRAPE.

By a Fall from a Horse, Sir.

SCABBARD.

Sirrah, you lie. Were not you one of those cowardly Rogues, that ran away from the Fight at *Sedgemore*?

SCRAPE.

I! no not I, Sir.

RAG.

Indeed, 'Squire, he was at that Time in another Country to my Knowledge.

PINCH-

PINCH-GUT.

I have some Knowledge of him, Sir, I dare swear for him, he was never a Rebel in all his Life.

SCABBARD.

Rebel! you Whoreson, who do you call Rebels?

CHRISTMAS.

Nay, Captain, by your Favour, if you don't know it, these are Rebels who fight against their King.

SCABBARD.

Nay, by your Favour, Sir, where Religion is in the Case, I think 'tis no Rebellion to fight against whom you will.

CHRISTMAS.

Sir, for Civility sake, I am content every Man should enjoy his Opinion in my House, and I hope you will permit me the same Freedom; and thereupon I declare that Religion can never be a just Cause of Disobedience to our Prince, whatever Hypocrites, Libertines, and Atheists may (with the Bible in their Colours) pretend to the contrary. And here let this Argument stop. But you, the other Fellow there [*to Rag*] whence came you?

RAG.

I was born to better Hopes, an't please you, Sir, Heir to a good Estate, that fail'd by my Father's Mis-

Misfortunes ; and I, being bred up to no Calling, am compell'd to visit such noble Gentlemen as you.

FLYBLOW.

There is something in the Air of his Face that shews him not to be fram'd of common Mould ; and his Language bespeaks him something genteel in his Thoughts ; tho' his Body be disguis'd in mean Apparel.

PINCH-GUT.

You have spoken like a kind and charitable Gentleman, indeed they deserve Pity.

BALLANCE.

The Expectation of an Estate has been the Ruin of many young Men.

CHRISTMAS.

'Tis well observ'd, and if I had twenty Sons they should every one of them learn some Profession. The Riches of this World are uncertain and Kings themselves have often come to Want Here's something for ye, Friends.

PINCH-GUT.

Your Example, for Honour's sake, ought to be follow'd, most noble 'Squire.

[He gives somewhat to the Beggars.]

MIMICK.

And yours, for mere Shame, ought not to be refus'd, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*. Here, Friends, is my Charity too. [*They all give something.*]

BALLANCE.

Now go your Way, [*to the Beggars*] this Money will put you in better Habit, and fit you for some Gentleman's Service; leave off this wandering Trade, and keep to some settled Way of Life, any honest Employment is better than Begging, the greatest Curle of human Life.

SCRAPE and RAG.

Thanks to you, noble 'Squire, bless you all, worthy Gentlemen. [*Exit Scrape and Rag.*]

CHRISTMAS.

Gentlemen, I crave your Leave to retire a little. *Ballance* do you take care my Friends may be diverted with the most agreeable Entertainment. Gentlemen, your humble Servant.

PINCH-GUT.

Sir, I once more take my Leave.

CHRISTMAS.

Well, Mr. *Pinch-Gut*, if it must be so, thank you for your Company. [*Exit Pinch-Gut.*]
Gentlemen, rest you merry. [*Exit Christmas.*]

B A L L A N C E.

Gentlemen, 'tis my Master's Custom always to withdraw, and take a short Nap after Dinner; if you please, we'll retire into the Parlour till he returns; I am ready to serve you in all Things, that may give you any Pleasure.

S C A B B A R D.

Are there any Cards and Dice in the House?

B A L L A N C E.

Sir, there are, but not much us'd. Here is no Playing but for Trifles. We have seen by so much Experience, the Mischief of Gaming for Money, that my Master, many Years since, has banish'd that fordid Diversion out of his House.

S C A B B A R D.

Sordid, do you call it, Sir? that's no very civil Reflection upon me, and many worthy Persons, whom it does not become you to censure.

B A L L A N C E.

Sir, my Censure passes not the Walls of our own House, wherein 'tis very just my Master should prescribe what Rules he pleases; and it behoves me (as far as I am able) to see 'em observ'd: But as to the worthy Persons you mention, there may be several Sorts of 'em: Some for their Virtue and Ingenuity, are worthy of Respect, and Honour: Some, for their no great Me-

Merit are, I think, worthy of no great Esteem; and others, for their base, rude, and Porterly Qualities, are worthy of all Shame, and Detestation.

MIMICK.

Mr. *Ballance*, since you are so desirous to gratify the Company, I am, if you please, for a Dance.

BALLANCE.

Mixt Dances are neither modest nor safe; but, if you please, to shew your Activity in a single Dance, we shall be glad to see your Performance. Pray, Mr. *Flyblow*, what are you for?

FLYBLOW.

Sir, I am most delighted with ingenious and witty Discourses, and next to them with Music.

BALLANCE.

Very delightful Recreations, both. Well, Gentlemen, if you please to walk in, I'll endeavour to please you all.

[Exit omnes.]

[Here should be the Dance.]



ACT III. SCENE IV.

RAG and SCRAPE, as going off from the House, to them PINCH-GUT, as going Home.

RAG.

VERY liberal Gentlemen: This is better than our Expectation.

F

SCRAPE.

SCRAPE.

Ay, but didn't not wonder at *Pinch-Gut's* Liberality?

RAG.

Hang him, an old Knave; he would as soon have parted with one of his Eyes as that Shilling, if he had not been in Hopes of getting a Pound by it.

SCRAPE.

But Captain *Scabbard* had like to have spoil'd my Markets, if thou, dear *Rag*, hadn't not help'd me out of the Brambles.

RAG.

O, that's the main Art in our Trade, to know how to Lye well; if it were not for that, we should often be in the Mire, and yet have no Way to get out again.

SCRAPE.

But what will *Pinch-Gut* say to it, when he hears that he must Lye so impudently?

RAG.

Never fear, I'll warrant a Lye will never choak him: If Money be the Bait, he'll never stick at the Hook. But hold, look here, he's coming.

Enter PINCH-GUT.

What's here, my old Friends, *Rag* and *Scrape*, again! who thought to see you here! RAG.

R A G.

Yes, Master, here we are, and we are very much beholding to you for your Kindness at the 'Squire's to Day.

P I N C H - G U T.

O, that's but a small Matter to what I intend to do for you hereafter, if all Things fall out accordingly.

R A G.

Well, Master, the last Time we talk'd together, you express'd a great Liking to our Manner of Life, are you still in the same Mind?

P I N C H - G U T.

Ay, dear Rag, I am more and more in love with it, and now am fully resolv'd to turn Beggar.

S C R A P E.

But what will you do with your House, Master?

P I N C H - G U T.

Why, I'll lock up my Doors, and leave it.

S C R A P E.

But what will you do with your Goods and Provision?

P I N C H - G U T.

As for Provision, I never keep so much beforehand; but what I can carry always in my Budget; and then for Goods, I am not so vain-glo-

rious as to cumber my House with much more than an old Wooden-Platter, an Earthen-Dish, and Spoon, a three-legged Stool, and such mean Utensils as are quickly dispos'd of.

RAG.

But what will you do with your Money, Master? Beggars must not be rich, if they be, no Body will give them any thing.

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, Rag, that's the only Thing that puts me to any Trouble, because I do not know where I may hide it in the safest Place.

RAG.

But what if you should die when you are abroad, and your Money's hid, than no Body will be the better for it.

PINCH-GUT.

O, Rag, I'll make thee my Heir, and whenever I die, I'll tell thee where thou shalt find my Money, if thou'lt promise never to discover it.

SCRAPE.

But, Master, shan't I have a Share?

PINCH-GUT.

Ay, dear Scrape, because thou art a Companion, thou shalt have half.

RAG.

R A G.

Well, Master, but where shall we find it?

P I N C H - G U T.

Why, I'll put it in an Earthen-Pot that I have at Home, and stop it up close, and bury it in the Corner of my Garden, by the Damson-Tree, you may easily know the Place, because I have but that one Tree there; and when I die, I will leave it to you.

R A G.

O, Master, we give you hearty Thanks, and are ready to serve you in any thing; therefore, pray Master, when d'ye intend to begin your Journey, and live with us?

P I N C H - G U T.

Why next Spring, when the Weather grows a little warmer, and I have spent my half Loaf and Cheese, then when you come this away again, be sure and call.

R A G.

Yes, Master, we'll certainly come at the Time, and if we have no other Business, we'll return on Purpose to wait upon you.

P I N C H - G U T.

Well, my dear Companions, I'll go and do as I have said; and do you as I have appointed.

[Exit Pinch-Gut.]

R A G.

I think, *Scrape*, we need not be ashamed, but rather proud of being Beggars, if we are so much esteem'd by other People as we are by this *Pinch-Gut*.

S C R A P E.

Ay, and very justly too; for if we consider the Thing rightly, we are not Inferior to any of 'em, tho' they count us so.

R A G.

We are as good as any of them, tho' they have got a little more Money, perhaps.

S C R A P E.

As good! ay, there's no Difference.

R A G.

How so?

S C R A P E.

Why, all People in the World, Lawyers, Divines, Physicians, Merchants, Tradesmen, Landlords, Tenants, and every One are for what they can get, and so are we.

R A G.

'Tis very true.

S C R A P E.

Nay, we are better than any of them, if we go to that, for what we get is in an honest Way,
but

but they lye, cheat, cozen, defraud, oppress, and even kill Men for a little Money.

R A G.

I see you are acquainted with the World, for there's nothing more common, than such Practises as these to heap up Wealth, whilst Honesty is confin'd to Cottages, and most of all resident amongst Beggars. But, methinks, I cannot chuse but wonder at the unparallel'd Niggardliness of that wretched Miser *Pinch-Gut*.

S C R A P E.

O, 'tis enough to amaze One to consider it, if it were not a Thing pretty common, there would not be a greater Monster than such a Person.

R A G.

Well may he desire to be a Beggar; for the vilest of all Beggars is ten times more happy than he.

S C R A P E.

Or else he were the most miserable of all Men; for certainly there is no greater Affliction than to covet Riches, and yet not have a Heart to use them.

R A G.

Without doubt, there's nothing in the World so vile and fordid, so sneaking and detestable, as an old Miser.

S C R A P E.

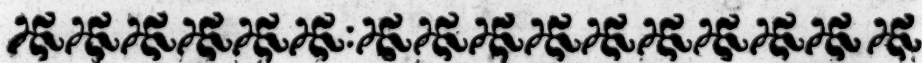
Or else he'd never turn Beggar at last.

RAG.

Well, we will serve him in his Kind; 'tis no Sin to cheat such an old greedy Wretch, and therefore when we return at Spring, we'll rob him of his Money, since we know where it will be hid, and drop him by the Way, as you know we can easily do; and so make him a Beggar indeed, since he has such a mind to it.

SCRAPE.

Well contriv'd, Rag, we can't take a better Course; 'tis better the Money should do some Good, than lie like Dirt under Ground; and I am satisfied 'tis no Sin to steal it thence.



A C T III. S C E N E V.

Enter BALLANCE, and SQUIRREL his Boy.

BALLANCE.

HERE, Boy, where are you?

SQUIRREL.

Here, Sir.

BALLANCE.

Go call the Servants immediately. I was afraid some Mischief was brewing in the Brains of this boisterous Captain. The very Trade indeed of a Soldier is, at the best, barbarous, and inhuman;

man; but when to the Bloodiness of a Soldier, there is superadded the Brutality of a Rebel, 'tis not in the Power of Hell itself to make any thing in Man's Shape more a Devil.

Enter SQUIRREL.

They are coming, Sir.

Enter SPIGGOT, SAUCE-BOX, and CLUB.

BALLANCE.

We are like to have some Disturbance in the House, I know not how 'twill end; perhaps in Bloodshed. The Captain is in a Flame, yonder, upon every Turn, they are all ready to go together by the Ears. Be within Call, and when I stamp, run in with all the Help you can.

[Exit Ballance.

[While Ballance is talking with them, a confused Noise is heard within, as of Quarrelling. Scabbard's Voice above the rest, crying, Damn ye you Dog.]

SAUCE-BOX.

What is the Devil in the Fellow! I'll make him relish a new Weapon, if he loves Fighting so well; he that will rule the Roast in my Master's House, shall have my longest Spit in the Guts of him. You are well provided, Mr. Club.

SPIG-

SPIGGOT.

And so will I too, presently. Give Notice to all the rest of the Family.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

ACT III. SCENE VI.

A very loud Noise within. Scabbard cries, Draw. After this, Mimick cries out, Murder. Flyblow, Help, Help, Help. Ballance Entering, he stamps in Haste.

BALLANCE.

Here, here, come away.

[*Enter SAUCE-BOX, SPIGGOT, CLUB, &c.*]

Make Haste, run in, either seize or destroy the Murderer. [They cross the Stage.]

Enter SQUIRREL.

O, Sir, [To Ballance.] there's One of the Company on the Ground, wounded, and wallowing in Blood.

BALLANCE.

Haste and inform my Master what has happen'd, while I secure the Murderer. [Exit Squirrel.]

Enter

*Enter CLUB, SAUCE-BOX, MIMICK, with Attendants
bringing in SCABBARD.*

SPIGGOT.

Sir, your Fears have been sadly fulfilled. By the Sword of this bloody Man hath Mr. *Flyblow* fallen, and the sudden Flux of Blood from his Breast, portends the Danger of the Wound; he is not dead, but lies pale and gasping.

*Christmas Enters, who takes his Chair, and sits like
a Justice.*

CHRISTMAS.

What fatal News has disturb'd my Rest? all was in Safety while I clos'd mine Eyes, and little did I suspect any Disaster within my Walls, that I should so soon turn my Slumber into Horror, and Amazement. *Ballance*, what has occasion'd this Mischief?

BALLANCE.

Sir, as great a Stranger as this Captain is, you could not but in your first Converse discern his Temper.

CHRISTMAS.

I saw he was a quarrelsome and boisterous Man.

BALLANCE.

And you perceiv'd he had been a Soldier, and much worse than that, a Rebel too; and what could be expected from such a one but Mischief?

CHRISTMAS.

What! no Mischief less than Bloodshed! what Provocation was given?

Mr.

MIMICK.

Of this, no better Witness than my self; to my Sorrow I heard and saw it all; the darkest *Christmas* I ever beheld in my Life. The Captain would needs be Gaming, a Difference happen'd about the Cast of a Die; the Advantage was clearly on Mr. *Flyblow's* Side, which yet, for Peace-sake, he was willing to forego; and with the softest Words, endeavour'd to pacify the Captain's causeless Rage; but all in vain: The Captain, like a brutish Coward, bid a Man draw, who had no Sword; and in that Moment stabb'd him.

CHRISTMAS.

A short and clear Evidence! Captain, you have in a most barbarous Manner violated the Laws of Hospitality, I were much to blame should I not execute the Laws of the Land, in a just Revenge for innocent Blood. *Ballance*, make his *Mittimus*.

SCABBARD.

I acknowledge the Evidence to be true, Sir, but I ever had an Abhorrence for Men of *Flyblow's* cringing, fawning Disposition.

CHRISTMAS.

'Tis because the Roughness of your own Temper urges you to Violence and Rebellion. Remember your former Guilt; a Sin unrepented, tho' not presently punish'd, will sooner or later, by Accidents unthought of, draw after it unavoidable

voidable Destruction. Here, take him hence.

[Exit Scabbard, with a Guard at the Veil-Door.]

Enter SQUIRREL *from the Lobby.*

SQUIRREL, to CHRISTMAS.

Sir, I come to tell you good News, and unexpected too; the Surgeon has examin'd the Wound, and finds it not so dangerous as was fear'd; the Faintness caus'd by Loss of Blood has been recover'd by Cordials; and Mr. *Flyblow* is desirous to convince you, by shewing himself alive in your Presence.

CHRISTMAS.

Go, bid him rest a while first.

MIMICK.

I am glad that Death is not like to ensue, but it would have pleas'd me much to have seen this Rebel swing.

CHRISTMAS.

If that will give you Satisfaction, you need not fear being disappointed. A Rebel never scapes.

Enter FLYBLOW *supported.*

Sir, I am rejoic'd to see you yet alive; this Accident would have spoil'd my *Christmas* for ever else; nor shall I hereafter make such numerous Invitations; a Number of Men, of what sort soever, is a Monster; nor can you scarce bring three Men together without Danger of a Quarrel.

FLY-

FLYBLOW.

I am sorry, Sir, [*speaks with a weak fainting Voice.*] my being here should occasion this Quarrel.

BALANCE.

Sir, you need ask no Pardon ; your civil Carriage would merit better Returns: But since the falsest of Men have taken up the wicked Fashion of abusing, and betraying their best Friends, by soft and wheedling Language ; therefore fair-tongu'd Men are by the Wise esteem'd as foul-hearted Knaves ; and this hath made all Complaisance suspected of Fraud.

MIMICK.

There's another Extream in Conversation, when Men are apt to rail and abuse all they come nigh, nor can forbear to back-bite the Absent.

BALANCE.

'Tis well observ'd, Mr. Mimick, and, I think, that is one of your Virtues, tho' perhaps you are either so modest, or rather so blind, as not to see it in your own sweet self.

CHRISTMAS.

What any Man is, he must learn from another, and not from himself.

MIMICK.

Then all great Men must needs be the greatest Fools ; for they encourage Flatterers too much, to hear any Truth concerning themselves. BAL-

BALLANCE.

Truly, Mr. *Mimick*, I thought you would have been the first that should have felt this Instruction from the Captain,

MIMICK.

O, d'ye think I had no Heels? I would have run for it, I warrant you, rather than have stood in the Way of his Whinyard.

CHRISTMAS.

Don't trust too much to your Nimbleness in that Case, Mr. *Mimick*, your Tongue may chance, sometime or other, to be too quick for your Heels, and you may come lame home. Well, Mr. *Flyblow*, 'tis not suitable to your Condition to pay Compliments now; you have stay'd here too long. Conduct him to his Chamber, and put him to Bed.

(*Exit Flyblow supported.*)

Ballance, do you dismiss the Company for this Day; our Noon-day Feast must end in a Fast to Night.

Such is the End of all our wisest Mirth!
Our liveliest Joys are strangled in their Birth,
No State is free from Sorrow on the Earth.

FLYBLOW.

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(Exit Flyblow supported.)

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EPILOGUE.

Spoken by BALLANCE.

A Subase who Build, on Entertainments make;
To each Fool's Censure their Discretion stake:
So they, who Wit on others Mirth lay out,
But hang their Credit on each Grinner's Snout.
How we shall 'scape 'tis doubtful yet; but pray
Don't you, my Masters, make't a Whipping Day.
Your Frowns we more than Rod or Fer'la fear;
And if you won't be kind, yet be't severe.
Once you were Children too; smile on these Toys;
And say, at least, 'tis well enough for Boys.
To tender Age your stronger Judgments suit;
Nor blast the Blossom, while you look for Fruit.
'Tis very strange to see a first good Play:
All Hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-Day.
No Art at first can full Perfection gain;
'Tis Time and Exercise must that obtain.
Young Birds at first don't boldly mount the Sky;
(But by Degrees more lofty Motions try;
And since we cannot all at once be wise,
But must unto the Top by Steps arise;
Whilst we aspire, look favourably down;
Do not dismay our Labours with a Frown.
We're not conceited of our Infant Wit,
But, to your awful Censures we submit.
On this attempt, your Pardon then bestow,
And when the Poet's Boys shall riper grow,
He'll entertain you with a better Show.

* This alludes to the Glastenbury Thorn.

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